

WYFRA	PERSONNEL AND TRAINING COMMITTEE	11 July 2008	ITEM NO
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REPORT OF: Director of Human Resources

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To inform Members of the actions required to meet the National Equality and Diversity Strategy

RECOMMENDATIONS: To note the report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT DETAILS

EMPEMPTION CATERGORY:

ACCESS CONTACT OFFICER: Mr M Redfearn
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS
OPENED TO INSPECTION:**

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This is a 10-year high-level Strategy, which aims to meet the challenge to bring real, radical, lasting change to the Fire and Rescue Service in England. It is designed to guide and support every FRA to deliver an effective service to everyone in the community and to treat all employees with dignity and respect.
- 1.2 The Strategy has been developed under the leadership of Equality and Diversity Project Board, set up to specifically drive its delivery and implementation. Progress will be assessed at least annually and the requirements of the Strategy will be kept under regular review.

2 Content

- 2.1 The Strategy requires action in five priority areas, linked to the Core Values and the Equality Standard for Local Government. WYFRS is performing well in most areas and will be declaring Level 4 of the ESLG by Dec 2008 and have already built the Core Values into the Equality and Fairness Policy, Conditions of Employment and the Learning and Behavioural Contract for Trainees. Our achievements to date:

Priority - 1 Leadership and promoting inclusion

- Member Champion for Diversity
- Senior Manager with responsibility for E&D
- Resources have been made available to deliver this agenda
- Members and Senior Managers have mainstreamed equality into meetings and committee agendas
- Equality objectives are an integral part of the PDR system
- We have close working relations with representative bodies
- We are fully participating members of LAAs in all Council areas of West Yorkshire

Priority 2 - Accountability

- Robust performance management processes in place
- Regular reporting of equality and diversity performance to both Management Board and Elected members

Priority 3 – Effective service delivery and community engagement

- Equality Impact Assessment process has been reviewed and improved and is embedded into the organisation
- Improved consultation with the community is taking place through the LAAS
- Community engagement is increasing through for example:
 - HFSRA
 - High Risk Strategy
 - Deaf Awareness Team

Priority 4 – Employment and training

- The numbers of women and BME firefighters has increased year on year and positive action continues
- Mandatory Diversity Awareness Training for all staff is in its second phase
- Facilities, equipment and clothing are subject to equality impact assessment processes

Priority 5 – Evaluating and sharing best practice

- The EDM is a member of the National E&D Professional Group producing guidance documents and sharing best practice across all FRS's
- WYFRS respond positively to requests from other Services in GB and Europe to look at our working practices

3 Employment Targets

3.1 Employment targets for under-represented group are as follows:

- Women - "by 2013, a minimum of 15% of **new entrants** to the operational sector to be women"
- BME - "by 2013, recruitment of minority ethnic staff **across the whole organisation** to be at the same percentage as the minority ethnic representation in the local working population" For WYFRS the target will be 11.5%. BME will include 'White other' category to take account of, for example, Eastern Europeans but this will be measured on the total workforce numbers.
- Attraction - Authorities may set targets for attraction/applications but this will not be measured nationally.

4 Areas for Action

Leadership

- Ensure that all employees are aware of and understand the core values
- Ensure members undertake appropriate training in order to perform their role effectively in promoting equality, diversity and fairness and providing leadership to others
- Review the Human Resources and Equality and Diversity Functions to ensure resources are sufficient to deliver fair and effective employment practices
- Ensure that equality and diversity issues are fully considered in the procurement of goods and services

Accountability

- Comply with the annual reporting requirements each September to the CLG
- Seek regular peer reviews (at least once every three years)

Effective service delivery and community engagement

- Ensure that the IRMP takes full account of the needs of local communities
- Continue with the Equality Impact Assessment processes
- Communicate progress on service delivery to local communities, including targeted communities
- Communicate clearly with staff to raise awareness and understanding of local community issues and the actions needed to address them

Employment and training

- FRA will undertake equal pay audits as required by the Equal Pay Act and take steps to ensure staff are paid appropriately for undertaking work of equal value

Evaluating and sharing best practice

- Undertake employee and community surveys, in partnership with representative bodies, to measure perception of the FRS as an employer and service provider and to assess the level of effective engagement with employee and community representatives.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the cost of the review will be met from within the existing revenue budget for equalities and diversity however it is possible that required changes following the review may result in additional expenditure. These will be reported to the committee including detailed financial implications as and when they are identified.

6 EQUALITIES AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All equality and fairness implications are highlighted in this report.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This Strategy sets out clear expectations for Authority Members, Senior Managers and employees on attitudes and behaviours, including valuing service to the community by working with all groups to reduce risk and valuing diversity by treating everyone with dignity and respect. Embracing diversity can only assist us in helping to provide a better service to the community of West Yorkshire and ensure our vision of making the county a safer place is achieved.